MilAtari Limited Edition

This Month:

General Meeting
Sat., April 21st, 12:00 Noon
Greenfield Park Lutheran Church
1236 S. 115th St., West Allis

Exec. Board Meeting
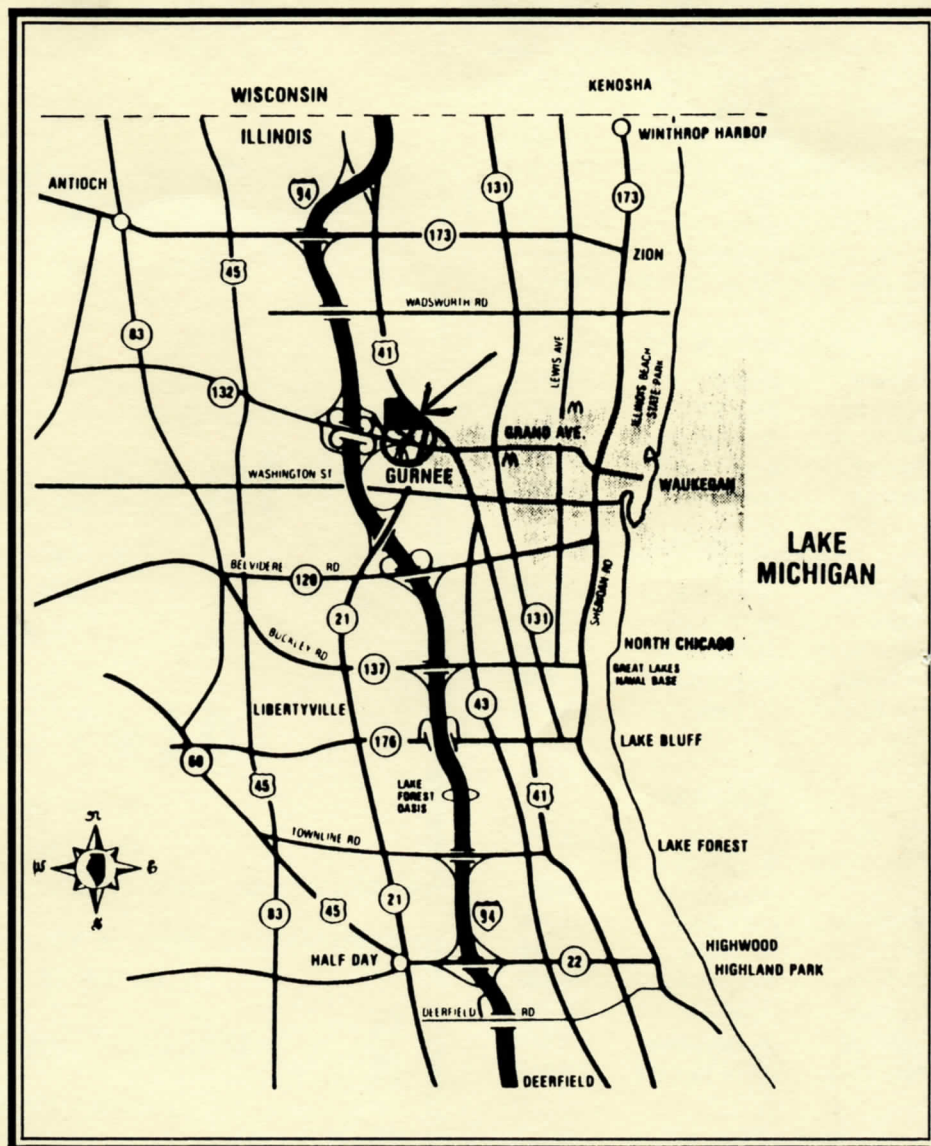Sun., April 29th, 7:30pm
Pepino's, 9909 W. Appleton

Next Month:

General Meeting
Sat., May 19th, 12:00 Noon
Greenfield Park Lutheran Church
1236 S. 115th St., West Allis

Inside:

Midwest Atari SwapFest '90

The Midwest Atari SwapFest '90

...is just around the corner. It will be held on Sunday, April 22nd, 1990 from 10:30 AM to 4:30 PM, at the Diplomat in Gurnee, Illinois. This is right across from Great America, a quick 40 minute drive from the Milwaukee area. Atari owners from all over the Midwest will be in attendance, so some real bargains are bound to be available. In addition, a number of vendors will also be at the SwapFest, with the newest software and supplies. Tickets are $2.00 per person prepurchased from the club, and $3.00 at the door. If you wish to sell items, there is a $10.00 table charge, but several members can share a table... contact Dr. Armin Baier for details. And finally, Bob Brodie, Manager of User Group services from Atari Corporation is scheduled to appear, and he has promised to try to bring some of the newest items Atari has to offer for demonstrations. This promises to be a major event, boys and girls, so don't miss it!

MilAtari Ltd.
The Milwaukee Area Atari Users Group
Post Office Box 14038
West Allis, WI 53214

Membership in MilAtari Ltd. is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are $20.00 for individuals, $25.00 per family and includes a one year subscription to this newsletter and access to club libraries. Membership applications may be obtained at the monthly meeting or by writing to the club Secretary at the above address.

MilAtari Ltd. Officers

President	Michelle Gross	628-4435
VP - 8 Bit	Bruce Rahlf	483-0464
VP - 16 Bit	Tom Bardenwerper	332-6762
Secretary	Linda Heinrich	421-2376
Treasurer	Dale Phillips	634-0200

MilAtari Ltd. Volunteers

BBS SysOp	Richard Dankert	628-2989
Cashier	Ed Newman	628-2556
Kid's Corner	Chuck Dahms	774-8911
Newsletter	Doug Raeburn	255-4342
Pub. Relations	Dr. Armin Baier	774-1673

Librarians

8-Bit PD	David Glish	784-9053
8-Bit PD Asst.	Help wanted	
ST PD	Dennis Wilson	546-0282
ST PD Asst.	Carl Verbanac	453-3940
ST PD Asst.	Bill Janutka	543-7609
ST PD Asst.	Bob Bobinger	466-9341
Copyright	Lee Musial	327-5376
Copyrt. Asst.	Dr. Armin Baier	774-1673
Publications	Everett Rantanen	327-4393

The MilAtari Ltd. Edition is published by and for MilAtari Ltd., the Milwaukee Area Atari User Group. Opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of MilAtari Ltd., its officers or advertisers, none of which are affiliated in any way with Atari Corp., except where noted otherwise.

For information on placing camera-ready, pre-paid ads, please write to the Newsletter Editor at the above address, or call (414) 628-4435.

MilAtari By-Laws, Sec. XII, Art. 1

Piracy of legally copyrighted software, hardware or documentation is hereby recognized as illegal and a detriment to the goals of MilAtari Ltd., and shall not be sanctioned by MilAtari Ltd.
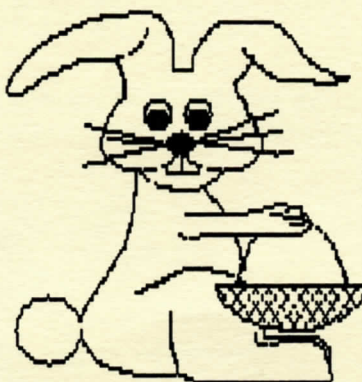
Easter Greetings from your friends at MilAtari Ltd.

Bob Carpenter

Wayne Gretzky Hockey

Mfg: Bethesda Softworks
List Price: $49.95
Type: ST sports simulation
Rating: Excellent

One of my first reviews that I ever wrote for MilAtari, before I became such a well-known figure <grin>, was of a game called Gridiron! It was the first ST game by Bethesda Softworks. It was, and still is, the best strategy football game available for the ST.

After a long wait (about a year) for the ST version to come out, it finally appeared at my local software store. Of course, since I've never found a sports game that didn't interest me, it took about two minutes for me to decide to buy it. I brought the game home and attempted to play it against a friend of mine. Since we hadn't read the instructions very much (if at all), I ended up not playing that first game since I thought that we had accidently selected a computer player. The point is that it is worth reading the manual for this game. There are a whole range of options (from adjusting the roster to adjusting the speed and direction of the instant replay).

When you finish with the initial screen, which asks you questions about whether you want to use a mouse or keyboard, what colors you want your team to wear, length of each period, etc., you will see a hockey rink viewed from rooftop level. If you press <Spacebar>, you will see a scoreboard activated with the score for each team, time remaining in the period, time remaining in a penalty (if there is one), and the overall strength of your line that is out on the ice at the moment.

You control the player that has the white helmet. If you are using the mouse (you can use joystick as well), then move the cursor that shows on the screen in the direction that you want your player to move. Your player will move at different speeds depending on how far away the cursor is from him. If your player has the puck, then if you click the left mouse button, the player will attempt to shoot the puck in the direction of the cursor. You can point this left mouse button, the player will attempt to shoot the puck in the direction of the cursor. You can point this toward another player (a pass) or towards the goal (shot on goal). It takes time to get into sync with the rest of your players. At first, it will seem like you are about 3 beats behind them. After some time, you learn to anticipate where passes are going and not try to be where the puck is all the time. If you cover your man, you will find that you will be more effective and feel like you're actually doing something.

As you get more adept at maneuvering around the rink, you can speed the game up to Normal speed and can control more of what happens on the ice (change lines and change which player you are). However, at first, it's advisable to keep things simple. There are some nice touches in this game. First of all, the players, while small, are quite realistic. At first, they looked like small insects attempting to pollinate, but when you pay attention, you see the player moving both feet in a skating motion. Nice touch. Also, when you have penalties, you will see a scoreboard with a picture of a referee giving the signal and showing what the penalty was and who it was on.

While the game has a nice joystick or mouse interface, I did find a problem with the joystick interface. If you played a two player game and both players were using joysticks, then you couldn't use the instant replay option. If you did use this option, the game would lock up and you had to reboot. It seems that the instant replay has a bug in it that insists that a mouse be in port 0 (the mouse port), even if you're not using the mouse at all. It's annoy-ing and unfortunate, but with the quality of the rest of the game, I would have a great deal of difficulty not recommending the game just because of that one problem.

Seeing that perfect pass that you made turn into a goal, or asking for the puck at exactly the right time and shooting a perfect shot to the side of the goalie. This is hockey at its best. The game has some very nice touches. It is very thorough statistically. I've always liked that in a serious sports game. Also, the game only uses documentation protection. When you ask for a different team or want to start a game, there will be a screen with approximately 16 pictures of hockey players in different positions. You must correctly match up the picture with the picture on the mentioned page in the manual. If you do this incorrectly, you will enter limited mode. I don't know how limited this is, because the only time I goofed, I just re-booted the machine. However, this protection is quite unobtrusive and allowed me to combine the two single sided disks on one double-sided disk so that I wouldn't have to switch disks for fight animation or the end of game sequence where you see the players walk back to the locker room. The only problem that I had combining the disks is that the program seems to get confused when I want to Quit Hockey. With the single- sided version, I ended up at the desktop. With my combination disk, it will either bomb out or hang at this point. But since I don't use my computer without a cold boot after playing a game (you never know what tricks they've pulled with the computer), it doesn't matter much to me.

Overall, I found it to be an enjoyable game, but one that probably is of most interest to a rabid sports fan. Other people might balk at paying $40 (discount) for a sports game

* * *

The editor and friends

Bits 'n Bytes

MilAtari BBS Alive and Well!

I'm pleased to report that the club BBS is back, and better than ever! As you probably know, the hard drive for our BBS went down right around Christmas, and due to a series of mishaps, stayed down until early March. The ramifications of this for the club were pretty severe... for one thing, the Board of Directors didn't fully realize how much we depended on the BBS to stay in communication until it was unavailable for nearly 2 1/2 months. Also, as newsletter editor, my normal source for article exchange was cut off. Even more alarming, rumors began to surface that the BBS and the club had gone under! Non-members who access our BBS apparently jumped to conclusions when it was off-line for an extended period of time. So, please, spread the word that our BBS and our club are alive and well!

So, how is it "better than ever"? Rich (our ever-intrepid Sysop) decided to make the best of the situation and he installed a new improved version of STadel, the BBS software, when he brought the system back up. New features include word wrap in the message editor, and automatic pause during message scrolling. And that only scratches the surface.

The other improvement is the addition of a second hard drive. After our recent mishap, the Board of Directors decided that we could not afford a recurrence of that extended downtime, so we allotted funds for a backup 30 meg drive. Rich will be using it for regular backups, additional storage, and probably for much more. So, there's never been a better time to visit the MilAtari BBS! See the notice on page 2 for details.

New Members for March

Please join me in welcoming the latest additions to our club roster:

Dave Landskron owns a 520ST color system. He ranks his experience at an intermediate level, and he's looking for information and programs.

Russ Stanley, who's active in both the ST camp with his 520ST and the 8-bit camp with his 130XE, rejoins our ranks. He is interested in ST classes and disk demos.

Like Russ, **Ron Kaye** owns both 8-bit (130XE) and 16-bit (1040ST color) systems. He's an intermediate user looking to share ideas.

Communicational exposure is the goal for 8-bitter **Tom Girsch, Jr.** with his 130XE. (I'm not exactly sure what that means... maybe Tom will elaborate at our next meeting...) Take note, 8-bitters - Tom has advanced level experience, so

he's probably a good source for information.

Frank Eva is a 520ST color system owner who is very active on our BBS. He has a wide range of interests and experience in many applications software areas. (By the way, Frank, since your BBS messages are so eloquent, could I count on you to apply some of your writing skills towards an occasional newsletter article? I sure could use the help!)

And finally, **Jeff Borman** is an intermediate level owner of a 520ST color system. He didn't give us much more information on his application, but we will certainly do everything we can to meet his expectations.

Welcome aboard!

Newsletter File Formats

I have been asked several times recently about formats for newsletter article contributions. I thought it would be a good idea to recap this information.

I can accept .DOC format files from either Word Writer ST or the original version of First Word (the one that was bundled with early STs). For any other ST word processor (including First Word Plus), I would need an ASCII format file (which virtually all word processors support). As for articles written using 8-bit computers, I would need ASCII (not ATASCI) format files as well. The preferred method of article submission is to upload the file to the Newsletter room on our BBS (as a file, not as a message, please). ST owners have the additional option of giving me the article on 3 1/2" diskette at the general or board meetings. 8-bit owners without a modem, please check with one of our 8-bit officers. They should be able to direct you to another 8-bitter who accesses our BBS. If you give the article to this person on disk, they will be able to upload it to our BBS for you. Please make sure that your name is in the article somewhere, so I can give credit where credit is due. And don't forget about the free PD disk offer for newsletter articles! (Details were in the March issue).

Newsletter SIG

Would you like to see **Publisher ST** put through its paces? Are you interested in seeing how you could use your ST to create a newsletter? On Tuesday, May 1st, at 7:00PM at the Greenfield Park Lutheran Church, I will be holding a SIG in which I will show you the various steps that I go through to generate our newsletter every month. In addition, I am looking for an assistant editor, an ST owner who I would train and who would have access to club-owned DTP software (such as **Publisher ST** and **Pagestream**). So, if you are interested in desktop publishing and/or would like to investigate the assistant editor's position, this is the SIG for you. Hope to see you there!

Well, that's about it from my corner of the world for this month... I'll be talking to you again in May!

Bob Carpenter

Grand Monster Slam

Mfg: Golden Goblins (England)
List Price: $39.95
Type: ST arcade/sports
Rating: Addictive, a bit difficult

In Grand Monster Slam, you are a dwarf in the world of GholD (Yes, it's capitalized in two places). Your dwarf has just entered the GholD equivalent to our Olympic Games. One major difference is that the Grand Monster Slam only has one event. However, like our Olympics, the Slam is a peaceful alternative for a violent society. The manual sets up an elaborate adventure game type scenario, complete with world map, for the Slam. Don't let that fool you though, it is an arcade game pure and simple.

You play the role of a dwarf from the western mountains. Your objective is simple. You must win the three rounds of the tournament which will win you the yellow jerkin and the golden metal. However, your task won't be an easy one. First, let's explain how the game is played. The field for the Slam looks similar to a football field or a soccer field. In fact, you kick a round object like in soccer. You will be on the near side of the field and your computer-controlled opponent (sorry, no two-player option) will be on the far side of the field. Lined up in front of each of you will be six "beloms". "Beloms" are beings from the mountains that participate in the Slam. Their participation is unique because they are the round beings that are kicked by the contestants. The object of the game is to kick all of your "Beloms" onto your opponent's side of the field. Needless to say, the "Beloms" are less than thrilled to be kicked around so frequently. You can see the discontent in their eyes as you prepare to kick them yet again.

However, you aren't the only person kicking "Beloms" to the other side. Your opponent is also trying to

get rid of all his "Beloms" as well. As a result, the game can result in an endless stalemate. However, I've yet to see that happen. The reason is that there is a way to get ahead of your opponent in kicking "Beloms". If you hit your opponent with a kicked Belom, he will lie stunned for a few seconds. In that time, you can kick more "Beloms" over to the other side. In fact, if you keep pummeling him with "Beloms", you can get rid of all your Beloms without him (or her) having a chance to get up. Unfortunately, your opponent can do the exact same thing to you.

Your dwarf has just entered the GholD equivalent to our Olympic Games...

However, once you kick all of the Beloms on your opponents side, you must hurry and run over to their side of the field (a "touchdown"). If you wait, Beloms will come back to your side of the field and you won't have won. If you kick a Belom into the audience, a "Pelvans" is assessed. Your opponent will receive a "Pelvans" (a bird-like creature) toward him and will kick him toward you. Unfortunately, you don't know what direction the "Pelvans" will come towards you. You make a guess before the kick and hope you guess right. If you don't, three more Beloms will come to your side. If you guess right, one more Belom will be added to his side. What determines this is the accuracy which you can hit the other player (or vice versa).

I have found that even the third league players (supposedly the easiest to beat) are not pushovers. It takes

some time to place your kicks accurately. If you win your first match, you will receive a score. It will vary depending on how many "Beloms" you had to kick in order to beat your opponent. The fewer number of "Beloms", the higher your score will be. After defeating your first opponent, you will enter "the Revenge of the Beloms". As you might guess, the Beloms aren't pleased with how they're treated in the tournament. They consider this their chance to take vengeance upon you. There are eight Beloms headed toward you and you have to fend them off using a "shove-off pole". The king demands that, after the first match, you must fend off 10 Beloms to keep your entire score. If you fend off less than 10, your score will be reduced (sometimes as much as half). If you fend off much more than 10, you will receive a bonus. I always have deductions in this event. Luckily, there's a practice mode to improve your skills.

If you make it through the third league (winning a total of three matches), then you enter "The Remarkable Six Faultons". Unlike the Beloms revenge, you must pass this test in order to move on to the next league. If you fail, you will re-enter the third league and you lose all the points you gained in your last match. In the Faultons, you must kick the Beloms into the mouths of the Faultons. The rules prohibit the Faultons from eating the Beloms, they must spit them out. In order to pass on to the second league, you must kick two out of six Beloms into the mouths of the Faultons. This takes practice to gauge the height of the Faulton correctly since all six Faultons are on different heights. In the second and first leagues, things get progressively harder. In the second league, the opponents get better and a barrier with only a small gap is added to the field. If you kick the Belom too low and it hits the barrier, it will come back towards you and probably knock you down. In the first league, the opponents have magical powers that they use to beat you. I'm taking the

Doug Raeburn

MONOPOLY

Mfg: Leisure Genius
List Price: $39.95
Type: ST board game simulation
Rating: Not bad, but not great

Board games come and board games go. A few years ago, Trivial Pursuit was all the rage. Now you hardly ever hear about it. Then there was Pictionary (now collecting dust in many closets all over America). The best way for a game NOT to grow old gracefully is to become a monster fad - when the fad dies, the death is particularly painful.

One game that has not suffered such a death is Monopoly. It has endured for quite a number of years longer than I have been around, probably because it has never been a fad. It's simple enough for people of nearly all ages to play, with its combination of lots of luck and strategy. So, if you own the rights to such a venerable game, how do you pump some new life into the old girl? Leisure Genius is trying with the new computer version of Monopoly. But is it really an improvement?

Just in case you have been living in a cave all of your life and somehow don't know what Monopoly is, it is a real estate game. You buy, sell, mortgage and improve properties on the board. The winner is the person who ends up owning everything, ruthlessly crushing everyone in his or her path. This game epitomizes the bumper sticker "The one who dies with the most toys wins".

The best word to describe computer Monopoly is "cute". The graphics effectively recreate the appearance of the real Monopoly board. The Community Chest and Chance cards look like the real thing. The deed cards are even cuter than the real thing. You even get to select a "cute" token, just like in the original game, from a sports car to a thimble. This game is just "cute" from head to toe.

The rules are faithful to the real game. From 2 to 8 players can play, and these players can consist of nearly any combination of human and computer players. Each player is assigned a token and a name. Then the order of play is determined by rolling the dice.

As in the board game, a player has the option to buy an unowned property when she lands on it. If she elects not to buy (or doesn't have enough money), the property is auctioned by the bank. When another player lands on a property that you own, you collect rent. Rent can be at several levels, depending on whether or not you own the entire color group and if you have houses or hotels on the property. You can only improve a property if you own all properties in the color group (either 2 or 3 properties). As more and more properties are purchased, you can then arrange for trades between players, trying to complete your color groups. In addition to the color group properties, there are the railroads and utilities.

The game is controlled primarily through a series of commands listed on a menu list at the top of the screen. To activate the command, you press on its first letter. For example, to roll the dice, there is a DICE command. Press the letter D, and a graphic representation of dice rolling is displayed. After you move, the space that you are on appears, large and in detail, in the lower right corner of the screen. The 3 spaces in front of you are also displayed, slightly smaller. The position of all players is seen on the smaller representation of the entire board which takes up the upper 2/3 of the screen.

Another primary method of control is through dialogues in the center of the screen. For example, let's say you want to mortgage a property. Press M to activate the Mortgage command. The game first verifies that you want to mortgage through the dialogue. Having done that, a cursor containing the letter M appears on the board. You use the arrow keys to move it to the property you want to mortgage (or un-mortgage) and press the RETURN key. The dialogue will then display how much the bank will pay (or how much you have to pay back to unmortgage) and asks you to verify again. To mortgage more properties, you repeat the sequence of commands.

Other commands include Trade (to trade properties) and House (to buy houses or hotels), among others. Most of these commands can be activated at any time, whether or not it is your turn.

You can also check on a variety of status conditions. For example, you can check other players' wealth (how much money they have and the value of the property they own), as well as who owns what property. Unlike the board game, you must resort to this status display to find out this last item, which can be a bit inconvenient at times. For example, if another player requests a trade, you are not able to check this status at the point when the computer asks you whether or not you want to make the trade. Since this decision can be affected by the ownership of property, this is a serious drawback.

Game play goes briskly, until you have to perform a fairly complex transaction, such as a trade. Here is a sample scenario. Press T to trade. Verify that you want to trade by pressing Y. Press your player number. Use the cursor on the board to highlight the property desired. Press Return to accept it. Repeat the above procedure with the cursor until you have selected all properties you want to trade. Press Q to quit the "trade from" phase. Press the player number of the person to trade with. Select the properties desired with the cursor and press Return. Repeat for all desired properties. Press Q to quit the "trade with" phase. Enter the amount of cash involved (if any). Specify if the trader or "tradee" gets the

Dale Rybacki

MicroLeague Baseball

Type: 8-bit sports simulation
Rating: Recommended

Since I was a young boy, I have been fascinated with baseball games. A deck of cards with balls and strikes instead of jacks and queens was followed by player disks placed under a spinner. Then came statistical games such as "Strat-o-Matic" and "Apba" using dice and players cards. And with each game I'd keep elaborate records and figure ERAs and batting averages for the players.

Now that I'm older and my toys are more sophisticated, along comes "MicroLeague Baseball". It is a set of three disks: the game disk, a stats compiler disk and the general manager disk. The package is ideal for those who love baseball statistics. The game disk includes teams as varied as the 1927 Yankees and the 1982 Brewers. (Remember them?) The general manager disk allows you to create new teams based on the current season and to trade players between existing teams. The stats disk compiles game statistics and prints out the box score of the game. There is also a team disk available which has teams from the season just past. If you don't mind a little work, you can create your own selective teams using the final stats in "The Sporting News". That is exactly what I did when I established my own ten team league.

The game disk can be enjoyed without either of the other two. It can be played with two people; it can be played against the computer or the computer can play itself with the teams you choose. The designated hitter can be used or the pitcher can bat. The managing decision is yours. Go with the selected lineup, or make substitutions. Once the game starts, you choose from four pitches. You position the infield. You can visit the mound when you starter gets tired. On offense you swing away, hit and run, or steal.

The computer will play the game against itself. This is handy in reproducing a season with your own teams. The game is played on the screen with good graphics. The music can be turned off as can running to the dugout to speed the game up a bit. Unfortunately,

---

MicroLeague Baseball has afforded me many hours of enjoyment.

---

the computer game is played pitch by pitch, but many times I found myself sitting in front of the screen as intrigued by the simulation as by the real thing. Like I said before, I created my own ten team league. I choose five AL and five NL teams. It started with 1987 stats and I updated it a few times since then. Some players were traded between teams and some disappeared. With the stats disk I could watch the season develop. Boston was the AL leader and the Cubs struggled with Montreal for 1st in the NL.

The teams stats can be printed out to allow hard copy viewing. With a data base program, the stats can be entered, updated, sorted and printed in any form desired. The teams won-loss record can be tracked with a spreadsheet. The possibilities for statistics manipulation are almost endless.

MicroLeague Baseball has afforded me many hours of enjoyment. It was something I dreamed of when I was that little boy turning over those cards.

*   *   *

Monopoly
from previous page.

cash. Finally, if you haven't made any mistakes, the computer will ask the other person if he or she wants to complete the trade. And yes, the process while playing the game is every bit as complex as the above description. If this game supported a mouse (for property selection, for example), it might be considerably easier to play.

So far, we have cute graphics, "faithful to the original" game play, and an occasionally unwieldly command interface. So, what are the advantages of computer Monopoly?

First, it plays a pretty competitive game as computer player(s). So, if you are a real Monopoly fan and find yourself without opponents from time to time, this game could be for you.

Another advantage could be a much neater and easier to play game, what with no money, deed cards, etc. with which to mess around. Unfortunately, the situation described above about not being able to access the status screen during a trade has forced me to resort to using deed cards from the board game and keeping them for each player for reference. So much for that advantage.

Finally, the game could be much faster and easier to play, being that it is on a computer. And, for the most part, it is. However, as described above, complex transactions can be anything but quick and easy. I think that the command interface could stand some improvement.

Overall, though, I think the pros outweigh the cons, especially if you can't always find one or more opponents. I guarantee that you will find the computer to be a worthy opponent. And the game is a great success graphically, and will probably appeal to the kiddies. All in all, if you are a Monopoly fan, check this one out.

You may be wondering how this game compares to the GFA BASIC

David Glish

8-Bit PD Update

Bob Carpenter

The Ergostick

MilAtari Ltd. 8- Bit Public Domain Library Disks are for sale for $2.50 per disk. These charges cover the cost of the media and handling. Proceeds from the disk sales go toward the cost of the club's activities. MilAtari Ltd. supports the shareware concept, and urges our members to send contributions to the authors of those 8- Bit programs designed as "shareware", which they find useful.

There will soon be a new look to the 8-Bit P.D. library. The files are going to be reorganized by the type of programs on the disk. Come see the new disks and give me any suggestions you may have. Let's keep the 8-Bit library alive and well.

DISK 234

TEXTPRO   VER. 4.54 The newest and most complete version of Textpro yet.

DISK 235

TEXTPRO   VER. 4.54 DOCS Extensive documentation for the new version of Textpro.

DISK 236

TACTREK   A Star Trek strategy game complete with documentation on the back side.

DISK 237

ZYBEK   A fast paced arcade type game similar to Defender.

DISK 238

TETRIX   A Tetris clone.

FORTRESS   A Tetris clone.

ATARTRIS   A Tetris clone.

AIRHOCKY   A two player Air hockey game.

DISK 239

DEMAPRNT   A useful text file printing program that prints in compressed print up to three 40 column rows across.

CR.COM   A program for stripping control releases and converting files from ASCII to ATASCI.

CHOPPER1   A program for breaking up large single density text files into smaller more manageable pieces.

CHOPPER2   Same as Chopper1.Bas but for double density files.

FILESPLI   A program for splitting long text files into smaller pieces.

BRAND NEW FOR APRIL - A series of AMS disks. Come see all the choices!

Mfg:	Wico
List Price:	$29.95 (can be found for much cheaper)
Type:	Atari-compatible joystick
Rating:	A nice improvement

Those of you who have seen me write such long reviews in the past will be pleasantly surprised with this one. This review should end up being extremely short. I mean, what can you say about a joystick? Does it move in all four directions? The answer is an enthusiastic Yes! Seriously, though, the biggest question about a joystick for me is its durability. I personally destroyed a Wico Bat Handle joystick in about a month and a half.

However, a couple of months ago, I thought one of my cheap $4 joysticks was going bad (I was wrong) and I decided to try another Wico joystick. I had heard some good things about the Ergostick, so I decided to try one for myself. The nice thing about the Ergostick is that it's shaped to your left hand (like the Epyx 500XJ). However, unlike the Epyx joystick, the Ergostick is made out of a softer, rubber like material that absorbs sweat better and is a more comfortable fit. In addition, since the stick is smaller than the Bat Handle, you aren't using your whole arm to move the joystick. This is what made the Bat Handle joystick fall apart so easily for me. I've never been used to handling joysticks with care (I owned an Apple for years, and their joysticks are of a design that don't fall apart easily).

However, with the Ergostick, you are basically using your hand and nothing else to move the joystick. I found the Ergostick very useful for shoot-em-ups. Since the fire button is by the left index finger, it doesn't require the constant movement of the thumb that made me quit shoot-em-ups in disgust because my thumb would tire out too quickly. I've found the Ergostick to be very responsive and relatively sturdy. However, I'm still more careful than I'm used to with the Ergostick because I don't want to ruin my $17 investment.

Grand Monster Slam

manual's word for it on this one because I haven't entered the the first league yet.

Overall, it's a fun game that's quite playable. The manual does a nice job of setting the scene. However, the Rules of Play (the only important part) could have been better separated from the rest of the story. Also, beware that the second part of the manual is the English translation. The first part is the German translation of the manual. Now back to improving my last score...

Dennis Wilson

ST PD Update

MilAtari Ltd. ST Public Domain Library Disks are available at the meeting at a price of $3.50 per disk, and through mail order at $4.00 per disk. The charge for the disks covers the cost of the media and handling, with all proceeds going to support the activities activities of MilAtari Ltd.

Some of the programs on these disks have been released as shareware and are so documented in the programs themselves. MilAtari Ltd. supports the shareware concept and you are encouraged to make donations to the individual authors should you find their programs useful.

The MilAtari PD Libraries are intended to provide a repository for useful and interesting programs, and each file is tested before inclusion on the disk. We believe that each file is worthy of your consideration. No warranty is expressed nor implied, however, as to their content or usability. Defective disks will be gladly replaced. These disks are made available for sale at the the the monthly club meeting and may be ordered in advance by posting a message in the Library Lounge on the club BBS. Librarians of other clubs are encouraged to contact our ST Librarian concerning trading of programs in their respective libraries.

DISK 256 - UTILITYDISK

PERUSER:
A program designed to read ASCII text files while allowing flexibility for viewing, printing, marking and finding text within. It will also enable the incorporation of Degas compressed or uncompressed picture files. To advance a page of text, click on the right mouse button, and to go back a page of text, click the left mouse button. Located at the bottom of the display screen is an information line. The bottom left corner features the text line numbers viewed, as well as the total number of text lines in memory. Besides the line number information, the amount of free memory remaining, the date, and time are also given.

SUPRVKIL:
Super Virus Killer - A virus detection and elimination program which lets you install any of seven included boot sectors on your unprotected (NOT commercial) disks. Some of them are quite colorful. It also lets you customize your own boot sector messages. Some of these boot sectors detect viruses trying to be installed on your disks.

VIRUSDIE:
A virus killing program which features the virus being destroyed in an "slow death" animated sequence. The animation can be aborted by selecting the "quick death" option.

The author states that several "hidden" features can found by clicking around the screen. Believe it or not, the program is joystick controlled.

VKILLER:
VKILLER Ver 3.11 (Feb 1990) - Probably the most famous of the virus killing programs. It works in medium or high resolution, and is completely mouse/icon driven. As of this version, the program may also be controlled by the keyboard. When the program executes a "Kill", it writes zeroes into all the noncritical bytes in the boot sector. No other portion of the disk is altered, and any files on the disk are left intact. This version also lets you "guard" a disk by inserting in the boot sector code which will detect a virus trying to be inserted on the disk. Vkiller now contains a feature for repairing the boot sector of a damaged disk.

DISK 257 - UTILITYDISK

ASTRO_17:
Cadenza AstroCal Ver 1.7 - This program generates, for any given year, a calendar containing the following information: 1) Times of sunrise, sunset, moonrise, and moonset for each day, 2) Times and dates of Moon phases, 3) Times and dates of solar and lunar eclipses, and 4) Times and dates of solstices and equinoxes. In addition to this calendar, the program can generate: 1) A report of all lunar or solar eclipses for a range of years, 2) A report of planet viewing information for a specified year, 3) A report of perihelions and aphelions of planets for a range of years, 4) A report of perigees and apogees of the Moon for a specified year, and 5) A report of the dates of Easter for a range of years. The calendar and reports are all customized for the user's location. All times and dates are in local time. The calendar and reports can be printed on a printer or listed on the computer screen.

NORAD:
The program shows an outline map of the world. Overlayed on it are colored specks representing more than a hundred satellites flying over the earth in real time. Point at a satellite of interest and click on it to get information about it.

PCFORMAT:
A program for easily formatting disks in IBM format.

SAT207:
Satellite Orbital Prediction Program - A program for predicting the orbits of Amateur Radio Satellites. Data for a number of satellites are included with the program. You can enter data for additional satellites with the aid of NASA Prediction Bulletins which can be ordered from that agency. The address is given in the documentation file.

ST PD Update
from previous page.

DISK 258 - GAMEDISK

INVADERS: A monochrome version of the old classic, Space Invaders. Keyboard controlled.

RACE02: Bermuda Race II - The objective of this racing simulation is to sail from Newport, Rhode Island to Bermuda in the least amount of time. The normal sea-going obstacles may be encountered. You may be penalized for bad starts or persistently sailing in the wrong direction. You could lose time from experiencing lost (damaged) bilge pump(s) or being hit by following seas. You could lose satellite navigation and have to find your own way. You could be dismasted in a hurricane or run aground in the flats off Bermuda. The player reaching Bermuda in the least total time wins the race and may be listed in the players hall-of-fame. You say you don't know how to sail? Never fear! "Sailing Instructions" and "Pointers" are included. The program is completely mouse and menu driven with 5 levels of difficulty. Play against the computer or against another human player. If you play against the computer, you can select whether the computer goes first or second. You can also select fast or slow play.

DISK 259 - GAMEDISK

ATOMS: The object of the game is to wipe out the other player's "atoms" by causing a chain reaction. To do this, you "overload" a square. For 2 to 4 players. Played on a 10 x 6 grid.

ROULETTE: Do you care to match wits with lady luck? Roulette will test your fortitude and resolve. This game features all of the standard American casino bets and rules, and a wheel spinning sequence demonstrates the ST's 3-D graphics capabilities. Very colorful, well done, and enjoyable to play.

SKATES: Skate Tribe - A fast-paced arcade game of skateboard racing. Dodge the obstacles while picking up the greenbacks littering the race course in this overhead view game. The game features multiple levels and outstanding graphics. This is a truly top-notch commercial quality game, one of the best yet made with STOS. Hint: Watch out for the "turbo wheels" in level two.

DISK 260 - GAMEDISK

DMEDITOR: The Dungeon Master Editor - A program which allows you to do the following things to a Dungeon Master game file: 1) Alter the map at will to create short cuts, new passages etc., 2) Alter it so you can open doors during the game without using keys, 3) Remove secret doors, 4) Print out plans of all the fourteen levels in the Dungeon. It will run in any screen mode and works by altering a saved game file and so doesn't affect the original Dungeon Master disk.

GHOSTMIN: Ghost Mine - Production in the fruitful alabaster mines of Septeebo have been brought to a screeching halt. It seems that during excavation in the lower pit of the mine an ancient tomb was ruptured releasing a deadly mirror ghost and a fleet of spider guards. The combination has made it impossible for miners to once again work the catacombs for precious jewels. You, the bravest miner of the lot, have volunteered to drop into the mine with a special vaporizing weapon. If you can vaporize all of the spiders before your energy supply runs out the mirror ghost will be destroyed and the mines can again reopen. Made with STOS.

SHANGHAI: A demo of the computerized version of the Chinese "tile" board game. A game which has been out for the ST for some time, but which remains a classic. The graphics are beautiful and help screens are available to teach you the game. Whether you want to try-before-you-buy or just want something with which to show off your machine, this will be a worthy addition to your PD library.

Put It to Use!
by Dale Rybacki

My 800XL has been kept busy lately. Not with games, although it's very capable of that, but with words. With a text editor such as TEXTPRO (my current favorite), your 8-Bit can become your personal means of expression. The various ways of configuring TEXTPRO can fulfill any needs you may have. You can format your file for uploading to a BBS. Develop your editorial sense and join in some of the lively debates going on in the BBS world. There may be poetry, a short story, or the next best-selling novel hidden away in your mind.

The fifty-two keys on the keyboard can serve as a conduit between your thoughts and the paper. Perhaps you're dedicated to the vanishing art of letter writing. There are people around the country and around the world that engage in the exchange of ideas through personal letters. There is even a magazine dedicated to this endeavor called "The Letter Exchange." It's available at PO Box 6218, Albany, CA 94706. For anyone seeking some international understanding, they offer a service called "LEX-MEX Correspondents."

Instead of letting your reliable 8-bit collect cobwebs between the occasional games your kids play, boot it up and use it as a mirror of your mind. It's waiting for you; the power is in your fingers.

Bill Janutka

ST PD SupplementaryLibrary Update

DISK 038 GAME DISK (DS ONLY)

Dungeon Master Maps - This disk contains a Spell Reference Chart and maps of 14 levels of the dungeon. The chart and maps can be printed out using a screen dump to an Epson compatible printer. The Spell chart is printed in six segments so that a large chart can be made by using cut-n-paste. The chart is viewed using TINY-VIEW.PRG and the maps are viewed using SHOWPIC.PRG or DSLIDE.PRG, all of which are included. By using DEGAS the pictures can be dumped sideways to the printer for a larger view. Either a mono or color monitor can be used.

DISK 039 GAME DISK (DSE)

Grand Prix 2 - A nicely done road racing program that runs in low resolution. The disk contains 20 different tracks of increasing difficulty. Speed and steering are controlled using a joy stick. Requires a color monitor and joystick.

* * *

ST INFORMER DISKS

Just a reminder, a number of the people who subscribed to the ST Informer through MilAtari have yet to pick up their public domain disks. Those of you that have a disk coming, please bring a blank disk to the meeting to exchange for the ST Informer P/D disk. This function is tying up a number of club disks and will therefore have to be concluded shortly. The availability of these disks will be maintained until June. Those of you who are unable to pick up your disks by then will have to make special arrangements.

version available in the public domain. As admirable an effort as the PD version is, it plays pretty loose with the rules, and the computer players can be REALLY dumb (such as trading Park Place for Baltic Avenue, completing both sets). They make moves that no human player would make. The PD version is merely an amusing diversion, while the commercial game is the real thing.

From The President

Just a short report for me this month!

The weekend of the 21st and 22nd will be a big one for MilAtari members. The Midwest Atari SwapFest '90 is in the final stages of planning and I think you'll find it to be much more than a swapfest. This is your opportunity to mingle with other Atari enthusiasts, meet Bob Brodie, Manager of User Group Services at Atari, and pick up some good deals on software, hardware, and other computer related products.

Don't forget that April is also election month for MilAtari members. It is not too late for anyone interested in running for office. Nominations can still be taken. Contact Dr. Armin Baier or Carl Verbanac for more information.

See you at the meeting!

Michelle

ImportantNotice

There were complaints about behavior in the Kid's Korner at the March General Meeting. If your kids are playing in the Kid's Korner, please be sure to check on them frequently to make sure that everything is under control. Thank you for your cooperation!

MilAtari Ltd.
The Milwaukee Area
Atari Users Group
P.O. Box 14038
West Allis, WI
53214

David Glish
1020 Parkway Dr.
Brookfield WI 53005
Dec 90